

Brut adapts its content formats to deepen engagement with the YouTube audience

French publisher Brut is a global media company that creates short-form video content for audiences around the world. Established in 2016, it publishes daily across eight social media platforms, in three languages, and generates over 1.5B views a month.

OPPORTUNITY

Brut creates short videos for all social media platforms, but they saw an opportunity to set up a dedicated digital video programming team to create more bespoke and high-quality content, so they could better engage YouTube audiences.

APPROACH

Brut first established a team dedicated to digital video, purchased the equipment necessary for creating content, then started to build a network of YouTube creators they could work with. With the team and collaborators in place, they could start to experiment with different formats to see what resonated best with a YouTube audience.

Setting up the digital video team for success: The first step was to recruit a YouTube community manager to support the team. Brut decided to hire someone with no journalism experience, but who had a good understanding of the YouTube audience, platform, and content optimization. Brut then purchased high-quality cameras, microphones, lights, and trained current reporting staff on how to use them.

Format experimentation: The team then started to dig into the stylistic and production changes they'd need to make to create engaging, longer-form content (e.g., longer takes, different shooting styles, topics, etc.). The Brut team eventually decided to test the impact of 10-15min documentary-style videos, on a range of topics important to young people, that would be released once a week. In parallel to developing the series, they identified successful French YouTube creators and approached them about collaborations. The first episode aired three months later – a 15min documentary where two well-known YouTube creators went undercover to report on the conditions of livestock on a farm.

Revisiting workflow processes: The biggest challenge Brut faced was keeping to their production schedule – it was increasingly difficult to find a good story and an influencer or creator to work with. After six months, they realized they needed to hire another team member who could focus on advance scheduling and production. Now, they have two episodes on the go at any given time (one in production and one in editing).

Expanding to reach an international audience: As a final step, they wanted to broaden their reach to an international audience, and worked with professional translators so that all episodes could be published with English, French, and Spanish subtitles.

3X



growth
in revenue

RESULTS

By focusing on a YouTube-specific publishing strategy, Brut increased their reach, subscriber numbers, and revenue. Within just a six month period, they:

- **Increased total views** of the Brut YouTube channel by over 53%.
- **Saw a 120% increase** in average watch time.
- **Grew subscriber numbers** by over 200K.
- **Saw 3X growth** in revenue.

LEARNINGS

Understanding the YouTube audience is the key to engagement and retention: There are huge benefits in matching content to platform, so understanding YouTube's unique narrative and storytelling best practices is critical. For example, Brut found YouTube news audiences responded well to longer formats and more in-depth topics. When they adapted their production style to deliver content like this, they were rewarded with deeper engagement and greater loyalty. As an added bonus, Brut reporters were motivated by the opportunities and challenges that telling longer-format stories afforded.

Be prepared to test and learn your way to the best formats: Start creating content based on YouTube best practices, but be prepared to tweak as you learn more about your YouTube audience and community. For example, Brut initially wanted a known YouTube personality in the field for every episode, but realized that this didn't work for all topics. Instead, they now sometimes use a YouTube Creator as a narrator, and have their own journalists do the actual reporting.

Different formats equal different production processes: If you're experimenting with new formats, be prepared to revisit your workflows and capabilities as you roll out content – and don't worry if you don't get it right the first time. Brut found it was a huge strain on their resources keeping up with their initial proposed production schedule of one long video a week. After a few months, they hired more team members so they could continue to deliver on schedule. They now have a much better understanding of the production processes and resources needed to create and deliver made-for-YouTube formats.

200K+



increase in
subscriber numbers